

Oct. 27

Amendment 2 seen as giving green light to discrimination

Groups protest at car dealership

By **D'Arcy Fallon**
Gazette Telegraph

Amendment 2 is just the tip of the iceberg. If the controversial amendment is passed, it will open the door to further discrimination against women and minorities, a group of minority leaders and feminists said Monday.

As they stood on busy Motor City Drive outside the Chrysler-Plymouth auto showroom of Will Perkins — one of the key champions of Amendment 2 — Perkins called to them: "You're welcome to step onto the lot."

"No thanks, this is our press conference," replied Jim Tucker, president of the Colorado Springs branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

The press conference, held by the Colorado Springs Minority Coalition and the El Paso County chapter of the National Organization for Women, was staged outside Perkins' auto dealership to underscore the groups' opposition to Amendment 2, which would ban laws extending civil rights protection based on sexual orientation.

If it passes, Amendment 2 will serve to further discourage the hiring and promotion of minorities who don't appear to be part of mainstream society, said Cathy Golden, a political science professor at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs.

Colorado for Family Values, a group of mostly religious conservatives who drafted Amendment 2, promotes hate, racism and discrimination

against minorities in Colorado Springs and the state, Tucker added.

If Amendment 2 passes, women who favor abortion rights will be targeted next by the radical religious right, said Claudette Heffner, president of the county's NOW chapter.

"Many of these groups nationwide have similarities with Colorado for Family Values," Heffner said. "They all seem to be run by white males. They're anti-women, anti-ERA (Equal Rights Amendment), anti-reproductive rights. I can see that we have a backlash in this country right now against women, and it's going to get worse."

Perkins said it wasn't true that Colorado for Family Values had a bigger agenda.

As for Tucker's assertion that minorities would suffer if Amendment 2 passed, he said: "I don't think Jim Tucker understands what is happening about this issue."

In fact, gays and lesbians have a hidden agenda of their own, Perkins said. What they really want is society's affirmation for their "alternative lifestyle."

They'll never get it from him.

"No society in history has ever accepted homosexuality," Perkins said.

On Sunday, Amendment 2 again will be discussed at a NOW-sponsored forum: "A Legacy of Discrimination: What Are We Leaving Our Children?" The program will be held from 2 to 4 p.m. at the West Center for Intergenerational Learning, 25 N. 20th St.

Jones said an impact fee would ease the need for future property tax hikes.

District 38's proposal would impose a fee of nearly \$2,000 on the average newly built home, which according to school officials is 3,200 square feet in size and sells for \$118,506. Commissioners aren't expected to consider the issue until at least December.

Several years ago, the Legislature passed a measure allowing counties to establish development fees to pay for public improvements — including schools — in new housing areas.

At the time, El Paso County commissioners appointed a group to study the issue. But it never took action because home building came to a virtual halt during the late-1980s' economic slump.

Last year, Douglas County established a similar impact fee to pay for new schools. In August, the Home Builders Association of Metropolitan Denver and individual homeowners sued, saying the state law that allowed the fee is unconstitutional.

Scott Smith, president of the Colorado Springs Housing and Building Association, said commissioners should wait for a decision in the Douglas County suit before considering any local impact fee. He also said District 38 should seek ways to accommodate more students without new buildings — such as going to a year-round class schedule.

Jerry Parsons, District 38's business manager, said decisions on how schools operate should be made by parents and residents. "We are willing to listen to but not be told what to do by Realtors and developers," he said.

Views to be aired at public hearing on city budget

Gazette Telegraph

The Colorado Springs City Council will hold a public hearing on next year's proposed city budget at 7 p.m. today in the City Administration Building, 30 S. Nevada Ave.

City administrators have proposed a \$121.2 million general

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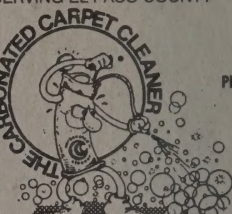
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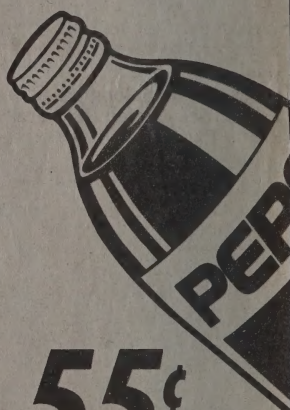
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